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# The Healing Art in China



GARDEN OF A PATIENT, MISSION HOSPITAL, AMOY, CHINA.

Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America,  
25 East 22d Street, New York.



A MEDICAL MISSIONARY'S "PARISH" IN CHINA. THE DOCTOR APPEARS IN SIGHT.

# Medical Missions of the Reformed Church in America.

AMOY, CHINA.

BY DR. J. A. OTTE.

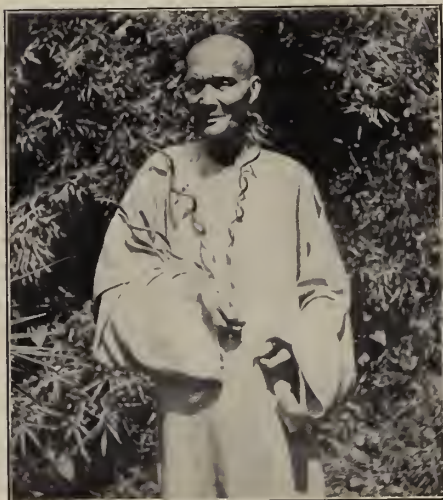


NEERBOSCH HOSPITAL, SIO-KHE.

While China has during the centuries of its civilization discovered the use of many important drugs, yet even these are crude in form and uncertain in their application. Added to a few correct therapeutic principles there is a vast amount of charlatanism, ignorance and superstition. Of anatomy they practically know nothing useful, of surgery even less, and of hygiene nothing at all. Snake skins, deer horns, and concoctions of many abominations are still medicines of great repute. Not long ago a very intelligent, wealthy gentleman asked the writer whether the alcoholic extract of a black cat with a white nose, minced—hair, skin, bones and all—would not be a splendid medicine for his invalid wife. This preparation had been recommended to him by one of the foremost native physicians!

With an ignorance of medical science all but complete, one can readily understand that even from the very beginning of modern missions the Church looked upon modern medicine and surgery as an entering wedge for the spread of the Gospel among such an unspiritual, suspicious people as

the Chinese. The motto of medical missions has always been "Through the heart to the soul." Win the affection of the people, and their gratitude and their souls can be touched.



NATIVE CHINESE DOCTOR.

As early as 1842 Dr. Cummings began medical work in the home of our first missionary, Dr. Abeel. He was connected with the A. B. C. F. M., as our own Board was at that time but a part of this organization. In 1847 ill health forced him to resign. Dr. Hepburn, since so distinguished for his knowledge of Japanese, labored among the sick of Amoy from 1843 to 1845. In 1850 Dr. James Young, of the English Presbyterian Church, took up the work, but in 1854 ill health forced him to give it up. From 1862 to 1877 the three Missions working in Amoy did evangelistic work in a hospital

largely supported by the foreign merchants of Amoy, medical and surgical help being freely given by foreign doctors not connected with the Missions. But religious work was forbidden in this hospital in 1877. Hence, five years later, the English Presbyterians once more took up this work under the direction of Dr. A. L. Macleish.

In 1897 the work in Amoy itself was finally taken up by our own Board. In the early eighties, Amoy City being supplied, we decided to begin in some other portion of the Amoy district. Dr. J. A. Otte was appointed to China in 1886. At that time there was neither money to send him to the field, nor even the hope of collecting a sufficient amount to build a hospital. The year of waiting was God's time for enlarging his experience, and for providing him with friends, who for many years to come would supplement the Board's efforts to maintain Medical Missions in China. During that year, while studying in The Netherlands, he one day addressed a congregation composed of orphans in a little village called Neerbosch, situated in the eastern part of The Netherlands. As the little ones were



originally waifs who had no one to take care of them, he naturally did not look for any contributions for his work. Yet at the close of the meeting a little Dutch girl came to him, and, with a winsome smile, handed him five Dutch pennies, saying: "Doctor, this is for the sick children in China." It was all the dear little thing had—all of her earthly possessions, given to her the day before as a birthday gift by her uncle. This story, told over and over again, was the stimulus which led many others in The Netherlands, and a few in America, to contribute enough for the first simple medical missionary hospital of our Church in China. It was called Neerbosch Hospital, after the name of the orphanage where the first money was received.



UNBINDING A BOUND FOOT, HOPE HOSPITAL, CHINA.

Dr. Otte finally reached Amoy in January, 1888. The Mission decided that the hospital should be built in Sio-ke, a small town sixty miles in the interior from Amoy. But this decision did not make it possible to begin

the work at once. While the officials gladly welcomed the coming of the foreign physician, the vast majority of the people were determined that the "foreign devil," with his "debasement anti-civilizing" methods, should never enter the place. But, in spite of this, through the efforts of that man of God, Pastor Iap, a good piece of land was finally purchased. The foundations were begun, when the people, armed with guns and other weapons,



EVEN THE BEGGARS WERE  
NOT WANTING.

drove the workmen away. For the sake of peace the land already purchased was given up and another site secured. But once more, no sooner were operations begun than they were suspended through the forcible intervention of an armed mob. A third site was secured. This was supposed to be haunted. It was thought that if the "foreign devils" once settled there the evil spirits inhabiting the place would soon change them into shades. But as the building went on in spite of evil spirits, the opposition once more began to manifest itself. For several days the work stopped. But God heard the prayers of His people, and in due time the Hospital was finished.

On the 29th of March, 1889, the buildings were finally completed and medical work begun. There will always remain the memory of loving help from America, Holland, and China. Hundreds of Native Christians, unable to contribute money, had given of their time and strength. Those were happy, if often anxious days.

During the first months the patients flocked to the Hospital in hundreds. Rich and poor came. Even the beggars were not wanting. Many came simply from curiosity, but others for the cure of real diseases. One young man came with a cancer of the upper jaw, necessitating the removal of half of that bone. There were no experienced assistants to assist during those early days—only a few young boys who had had a lesson or two from the doctor. There was the fear, too, that if death resulted the Hospital might be destroyed by an infuriated mob. But God gives strength where needed, and in this way the boy's life was saved. One man came from his distant

village, crawling over the rough mountain paths on hands and knees. One leg had literally almost rotted off, only a small piece of skin and muscle still uniting it to the upper part of the limb. Neglect and filth were the cause of the trouble. An amputation saved his life. An old grandmother was carried to the Hospital in a long basket such as the Chinese use to carry their pigs to market in. She was given relief.



ONE OF THE VILLAGES FROM WHICH THE PATIENTS CAME.

It was months before any of the native women dared to become in-patients. Stories of all sorts were rife. Nothing was too vile to accuse the doctor of. So when, at last, a young woman at the point of death became an in-patient a new anxiety was added to the many that were already present. For days her life hung in the balance. Had she died the conse-

quences might have been disastrous. But the Native Christians united with the missionaries in prayer on her behalf. Her life was finally saved.

Those first months were very busy ones. But during the New Year season there came a little relief, for then the Chinese do not come to the Hospital. They must all be at home to worship the spirits and to enjoy the festivities of the season. Then the Doctor in charge would go out with Dr. Kip to visit the villages farther inland, from which his patients came. Many were the kind welcomes he received from those he had helped. Thus, too, the Gospel was brought into distant homes, and the love of Christ proclaimed by word and deed. These trips were happy ones—restful to the body, cheering to the heart, and inspiring to the soul. The beauty of nature, together with the gratitude of those relieved, gave new vigor and a stimulus to further effort.

After six years of hospital work the time had come for Dr. Otte to take



DR. STUMPF TRAVELING TO VISIT PATIENTS.



a furlough. During these years over sixty thousand new and old patients had been treated at the dispensary and in their homes. During this time some two thousand operations of all kinds had been performed. By that time all opposition to the Hospital had ceased. Instead of being driven away in anger, as at the beginning, the foreigners were accompanied on their way down the river by two bands of Chinese musicians, who, with their discordant airs, tried to make their friends forget the pain of parting.

From this time on the work in Sio-khe was greatly interrupted. At first Dr. Dodd took it up. Then Dr. Fest came. But failure of health compelled both to withdraw in a short time. Dr. Stumpf followed. After a few years of medical work both in Sio-ke and in Amoy he also was forced to go home on account of the ill health of a member of his family. At present Dr. Snoko is preparing to take up the work.

After medical work in Amoy itself was given up by the English Presbyterians, in 1894, our own Board decided to take it up. In 1897 the first



HOPE AND WILHELMINA HOSPITALS.

steps were taken. Money for a hospital for men was raised in America, and for a hospital for women in The Netherlands. The former was called Hope Hospital, and the latter at first Netherlands Women's Hospital, but subsequently Wilhelmina Hospital, after the Queen, whose mother is now its official "Protectress."

As in Sio-khe, so again in Amoy, there was opposition to the building of a hospital. This time it came, not from the Chinese, but from the unfriendly foreign merchants residing in Amoy. Petitions were circulated against the

work. The Government in Pekin was appealed to. The workmen were arrested by the Commissioner of Customs. But through it all that splendid specimen of American Christian manhood, our Consul, Gen. Del. Kemper, stood firm, securing eventually the erection of the Hospital.

In April, 1898, the hospitals were so far completed that medical work could be begun. At the opening all of the native officials attended in their full regalia. Old Pastor Ti, of the Second Reformed Church in Amoy, conducted the dedicatory service. Many of the influential Chinese showed their good will by attending. The foreign community, too, including even some of the opposers of the work and their ladies, were invited to



ONE OF THE WEALTHY PATIENTS.

inspect the buildings. That turned the tide. Enmity was changed into sympathy. This has lasted until the present. When at the beginning of this year the income of the Hospital threatened to be insufficient a short letter asking for help was sent to these very business men, and they responded very generously.

For eleven years work in Hope and Wilhelmina Hospitals has continued uninterruptedly, with the exception of two periods of three months each. The doctors who have been in charge are Dr. Angie M. Myers, Dr. C. O.



OPERATING ROOM, WILHELMINA HOSPITAL.

Stumpf, Dr. Elizabeth Blauvelt, and Dr. J. A. Otte. During the last four years Miss Kranenberg has been associated with the doctors as a nurse.

Since the beginning of the work in Hope and Wilhelmina Hospitals 16,000 in-patients and 125,000 out-patients have been treated. Over 7,000 operations of all kinds have been performed.

The work is divided into *four parts*. *First*, there is the Dispensary. Five days are given to this a week. To these clinics patients are admitted free of charge, except that they must pay three cents for the card giving their number. This is paid but once, unless they lose their card, when a fine of three cents is imposed. Medicines and dressings are free. Only the bottles have to be paid for.

All classes of cases come to the Dispensary. A few years ago a kind



BRINGING A BABY TO THE DISPENSARY.

little woman led into the office a tall, well-built man, whose eyes had been gouged out by his fellow villagers to keep him from continuing his coarse bullying and immorality. If any one ever deserved such treatment that inhuman creature did. And yet to see the agony on the face of that little woman when his case was decided to be hopeless was enough to sadden even the stoutest heart.

At another time a father brought his beautiful little daughter. She was dressed in her best, and was really a very attractive little child. When she raised the sleeve of her dress, showing a great dark patch of raised, discolored skin, saying, "I am a leper; can you cure me?" it took an exceptional amount of courage to tell the truth about the case.

Some years ago an earnest young man, a student in the Theological School, was sent to the Dispensary for consultation, as he thought he had committed the unpardonable sin. Hypnotic suggestion was used in this





WARD IN HOPE HOSPITAL.

case, and effectively. Many, very many, come to these out-clinics with diseases so far advanced that they cannot be cured; but as many are helped and finally restored to health.

The *second* part of the work is connected with the In-patients. To these everything is furnished free except food, for which a nominal fee of ten Chinese cents (five American) a day is charged. They use a bed made of boards with a mat on it. For covering they have blankets enclosed in covers, and for head rest they have a wooden or bamboo pillow. The majority of cases are chronic. The ailments vary from tumors weighing more than the patients from whom they are removed, to those who think they are possessed of demons. Many blind apply for help, often too late.

A large majority of the patients come from the rural districts surrounding Amoy. Many have come from cities many days' journey away. A few have come from Manila, and Rangoon. Occasionally a stray case comes, by accident, from one of the distant provinces. All classes appear. Many a beggar has come with all his filth and deep degradation. The rich have rented rooms in the Hospital, and some have gladly given donations when cured.



JUST VACCINATED.

ferry. Finally he reached the Hospital. Unceremoniously he entered the office, and, turning his sightless eyes toward the doctor, he said: "Doctor, I am blind; can you restore my sight?" A happy lad soon went home seeing.

There is one glad note that drowns the cries of misery which often fill our heart with woe. It is the fact that to all these sufferers the Gospel is preached. This is the *third* division of the work of the Hospital. This evangelistic work is done by the ladies of the English Presbyterian and our

The happiness of some of the blind when their vision is restored is enough to touch even a heart of stone. One little blind orphan, who, because of his inability to earn a living, was turned out of doors by his uncle, heard of the Hospital while begging by the wayside. He was fourteen miles away, but neither the distance nor the fact that on his way to the Hospital he had to cross the bridgeless river four times deterred him from going. Carefully he felt his way along the narrow, rough road. When he came to the river he would set up the cry: "I am going to the Hospital; help me across." Then some one would carry him across on his back, or pay his way on the

own Mission, by the medical students, by the physician and nurse in charge, and by the blind evangelist.

There never was a more faithful worker than this blind preacher, Poe-hia. Originally he came as a patient for the cure of blindness. An operation gave partial vision, but disease soon destroyed even this little. But by this time he had received spiritual vision. Then he quietly began to tell the other patients of the love of the Saviour for men. Later he learned to read with his fingers. He even printed a large portion of the Bible and all the hymns for himself. For about a year he attended the Theological School; and now for several years he has been an unremitting, tireless work-



POE-HIA, THE BLIND EVANGELIST, CHINA.

er for Christ. No more touching sight can be seen than when on Sunday a row of blind men, some seven or eight in number, is seen being guided by this same Poe-hia toward the Hospital Chapel for the morning service.

Another phase of the work, the *fourth*, is that of Teaching. To this nine hours is given a week. The course extends over five years, when a certificate, stating the amount of work done, is given to those who pass the examinations. After this the students go out among their people to do



SCHOOLROOM, HOPE HOSPITAL.

what they can to relieve the suffering. The work of teaching has, in many ways, been the most pleasant and profitable part of our work. No graduate has ever left the Hospital without being a church member. With one exception, all of them are doing good work for the advancement of their people along religious as well as social and political lines. Some of them have gained great influence among the non-Christians. One of them is probably the most influential Christian in the whole of this region. He is, or has in the past been, an elder in the church, a member of the Amoy Police Board, a member of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and is also a





A PATIENT WITH TWO BROTHERS AND SEVEN SONS.

member of many charitable organizations, both in and out of the Church. In spite of his prominence he is often seen walking miles on Sunday in order to preach Christ to those gathered for worship in some one of our out-stations.

Another graduate has now been in the Hospital as student and assistant for more than fifteen years. A more faithful, conscientious Christian and kind friend it would be difficult to find. Though he was once offered a position where he would have had an income of at least one thousand dollars a year, he was willing to remain in the Hospital, earning at that time some fifteen dollars a month, and all because he dared not leave the more direct work for Christ.

Still *another phase* of our work is in Visiting Patients in their homes. Many of these are very wealthy, and gladly pay the doctor for his work, knowing that all he earns goes toward the support of the Hospital. Sometimes we go through weird experiences on these visits. Some years ago one of our doctors visited in one day a number of plague patients. The day was hot and sultry. The lightly covered sewers forming the bottom of the dirty streets emitted indescribable odors. An occasional corpse, covered only



DR. OTTE WITH STUDENTS, GRADUATES AND THEIR FAMILIES.

with a straw mat, lay unburied in the street. Everywhere red papers were pasted over the doors having inscribed on them "Kiu Peng-an" ("We pray for relief"). The air was full of smoke from burning sacrificial paper and from millions of firecrackers, which had been set off to drive away the demons. In the home of one of the sick lay a dying mother and her newborn babe. In that dark, damp, reeking room, too small to comfortably hold five people, some twelve or more neighbors came to see the foreign physi-

cian at work. The noisome atmosphere, the wailing women, and the stare of despair on the face of the dying woman made that scene unforgettable. Even the love of Christ seemed unable to bring relief to that home at that time.

It would be difficult to find a happier sphere of work than that of the Medical Missionary in China. There are many, very many, times of deep anxiety, but in all these God helps. Much is needed for the work that cannot yet be obtained. In God's own time these wants will be fulfilled. For what has been received we praise God, and thank the many friends of the work the world over.

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